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SHAKESPEARE'S DOUBTFUL PLAYS.

A YORKSHIRE TRAGEDY.



EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY

A. F. HOPKINSON.



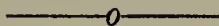
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INTRODUCTION.



*A Yorkshire Tragedy** was entered at Stationers' Hall by Thomas Payer, on the 2nd of May 1608, and printed by him in the same year, with the title of *A Yorkshire Tragedy, not so new as lamentable and true*. Shakespeare's name, as the author, was printed on the title page. It had been previously acted at the Globe theatre (of which Shakespeare was part proprietor), with three other short dramas, which were all performed together under the general title of *All's One, or Four Plaies in One*.

Under these circumstances it seems inexplicable how it should have become to be regarded as a doubtful performance. At that time, 1608, Shakespeare must have been resident in London, and probably superintended the business affairs of the theatre in which he held so large a pecuniary and literary interest; and even with our knowledge of the fact of Shakespeare's negligence of his name and fame, it seems hardly credible that he should have allowed such a thing to have passed without a remonstrance; and in the position he then held as the leading literary genius of the day, his remonstrance would have carried with it an irresistible weight. Assuming the play is not his, and that he was aware of its publication (a fact which it is only natural

*Stationers' Register. "2nd May 1608. Master Payer entered for his copy under the hands of Master Wilson and Master Warden Scaton a book called a *Yorkshire Tragedy*, written by William Shakespeare vjd.

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to believe), his silence in the matter makes him a passive party to the disreputable fraud practiced upon the public. It is but just to state that this tragedy was excluded from the first and second folio editions of the bard's works which were given to the public by his brother performers, Heminge and Condell, but whether its exclusion was intentional or through ignorance, it is now hopeless to enquire; and knowing the player-editors' carelessness in their duties it is not of much importance. The play was printed (with other doubtful ones) in the 1664 folio edition of Shakespeare's plays, but whether it was restored to its rightful position has from thence been an open question, and its place since then has been among those works of doubtful authenticity.

The question as to its authenticity has been argued and debated with considerable critical acumen, and sometimes warmth, by both parties, for and against, and little ground has been left for anything new or original to be said on the subject. Some of the ablest and most acute commentators on Shakespeare have contended that it is a genuine work of our national poet; while others, equally learned and acute, have rejected it as spurious. Mr. Steevens argued in favour of its authenticity, and discovered "at least three characteristics of Shakespeare,—his quibbles, his facility of metre, and his struggles to introduce comic ideas into tragic situations." Malone was partially convinced by Steevens's arguments and admitted they had so much weight with him, that he was unable to form a decided opinion either way. Schlegel, a learned and sympathetic Shakespearean critic, was convinced of its genuineness, and declares that its "tragical effect is overpowering." The German, Tieck,

who translated all the doubtful plays of Shakespeare into his own language, has not hesitated in giving his opinion in favour of its authenticity; and Isaac D'Israeli exclaims "surely the *Yorkshire Tragedy* at least possessed an equal claim with the monstrous *Titus Andronicus* not to be rejected from Shakespeare." Sir Walter Scott speaks of the tragedy as being "erroneously attributed to Shakespeare"; and Hazlitt was of opinion that it was more after the manner of Heywood than that of our great bard.

The terrible crime on which this tragedy is founded, was committed in the year 1604, and caused general excitement and curiosity throughout the country. It was the custom of the dramatists of those days—as it is with the novelists of our own time—to seize upon any domestic incident or tragic tale that engaged the public attention, and work it up into a hasty comedy or tragedy, in which they appealed to the feelings of the audience, not always in smoothness of metre or refined language, but by dramatic situations which reached their perception and their hearts at one and the same time. This fact should be always borne in mind when reading the works of our old dramatists, and will account for much of the hasty and unequal work they have left us to wonder at and admire. Two instances occur of this hasty dramatising of current events: the drama under consideration, and the noble tragedy *Arden of Feversham*.

The village of Calverly is situated in the West Riding of Yorkshire, about six miles from Leeds, and it was there the crime was committed. The account is thus given in *Stow's Chronicle*:—Walter Callverly, of Calverly, in Yorkshire, Esquire, murdered 2 of his young children, stabbed his wife in the bodie with full purpose to have murdered her, and

instantly went from his house to have slain his youngest child at nurse, but was prevented. For which fact at his trial in Yorke he stood mute, and was judged to be prest to death, according to which judgment he was executed at the castell of Yorke on the 5th of August."

Such is the story on which this little tragedy is founded ; the details are meagre, but the situations are well adapted for pathetic and tragic treatment. How has the author used the material at his disposal ? The work can be very conveniently divided into three parts, which might be thus distinguished :—Before the Tragedy,—the Tragedy,—and, After the Tragedy. It is difficult to understand what bearing the opening scene, in which the three servants appear for the only time, has upon the rest of the story ; as it stands it could very well be dispensed with, without injury to the plot or the play ; the only explanation of its presence that has been attempted, is that the author had intended to further develope the story, but finding the material at hand too slight had abandoned the idea as impracticable and confined himself to the mere facts of the subject before him. This short scene, however, in my opinion, throws a strong light on to the reader's mind, and seems to reveal the author of the play. I cannot read the scene without being struck with the similarity of expression therein, to that of Shakespeare's recognised works. In the next scene we are introduced to the cause that leads direct to the commission of the crime. Dicing and dissipation have ruined the Master of Calverly Hall ; he has gambled away his inheritance ; beggary, disgrace and ruin stares him and his children in the face, yet his mania for gambling is as strong on him as ever.

“I will not bate a whit in humour.”

he exclaims, and commands his wife, in language as violent as it is coarse, to dispose of her jewels and her dowry—

“to give new life
Unto those pleasures which I most affect.”

His neighbours, gentlemen of his own station, remonstrate with him on his evil courses, but he has entered too deeply on his career of vice to be turned from it by their admonitions. To his pangs of remorse he adds another torment (for which there is apparently no foundation), by imagining his wife is unfaithful to him. Here the first germs of the crime seem to vegetate in him.—

“My strumpet wife,
It is thy quarrel that thus rips my flesh,
And makes my breast spit blood ;—but thou shalt bleed.”

The wife, who is passive and obedient throughout the play, endeavours to stem the stream of ruin that has settled down upon them, by procuring, through the influence of her uncle, a place of emolument at court for her husband. He rejects the offer in coarse and contemptuous language.

“Shall I that dedicated myself to pleasure, be now confined in service? to crouch and stand like an old man i’ the hams, my hat off? I that could never abide to uncover my head i’ the church? Base slut! this fruit bear thy complaints.”

“Money, whore, money, or I’ll—”

He threatens her with his naked dagger, and a portion of the tragedy is only prevented from premature accomplishment by the sudden entry of a servant.

In the following scene we meet with the rather pompous

personage the Master of the College, who has journeyed from his university to intercede for Mr. Calverly's brother who has been arrested as security for debts which his profligate brother (the Husband) had failed to liquidate. In this scene the skill of workmanship is exquisite ; the Husband's real object is cleverly hidden by a piece of consummate dissimulation which serves to mask the purpose that is ever present to his mind. After the disappearance of the Master of the College, the Husband indulges in a long soliloquy which might mislead the reader into believing that the discourse of the Master had awakened in his breast a feeling of remorse for his past follies. If the repentance be genuine—which is doubtful—it does not last long ; he resolves to murder his wife and children, and the next moment puts the resolve into practice by stabbing his eldest boy, and with his reeking body in his arms he seeks the chamber where his wife and second son are ; the latter he despatches in the same brutal manner, and succeeds in seriously injuring his wife but is again prevented from carrying out his diabolical intention by the opportune appearance of a servant on the scene. Here we reach the climax of the play, and the dramatic situation strikes on the reader's mind with overpowering force. What can be more pathetic than the opening of this scene which discovers the Maid with the child in her arms and the Mother sleeping in peaceful unconsciousness of the shocking fate that has overtaken her eldest born ? The Maid's words seem to breathe a pathos that can be better felt than described.

“ Sleep, sweet babe, sorrow makes thy mother sleep :
It bodes small good when heaviness falls so deep.
Hush, pretty boy ! ”

The Husband enters with his bleeding son, and the scene changes to one of the most tragic intensity. After killing his second son and wounding his wife, he leaves the house with the intention of seeking his child at nurse and thus complete his plan of extermination by dispatching him. In the meanwhile, the servants have aroused the house; a party is hastily gathered together, and with the Master of the College at their head they set forth with the purpose of overtaking Mr. Calverly and preventing him carrying his fell design into execution. By one of those accidents which a supreme power sometimes places in the path of criminals, the Husband's horse stumbles and throws him; his object is yet unaccomplished; he finds himself unable to proceed and he rails and curses his untoward fate. He hears the hue and cry at his back and gives utterance to one last cry of disappointment and despair.

“What fate have I! my limbs deny me go.
My will is 'bated; beggary claims a part.
O could I here reach to the infant's heart.”

His pursuers overtake him, he is captured and carried before the magistrate. He shows no remorse for his hideous crime, but rather sorrows that he leaves a child alive.

“I repent now that one is left behind;
My brat at nurse. I would full fain have weaned him.”

In the next and concluding scene we are introduced to the Husband after his sentence, and just as he is being led away to execution. The glamour seems to have cleared from his eyes, he beholds the hideousness of his unnatural crime, and repentance thaws his stubborn and obdurate heart. He entreats to see his wife before the dread sentence

of the law is carried out. The Wife is brought in and the scene that follows is marked with a beauty and pathos not to be equalled in any other part of the play. Expecting reproaches from her, he finds nothing but love and forgiveness, which constrain him to exclaim—

“ But thou hast devised
A fine way to kill me ; thou hast given mine eyes
Seven wounds a piece.”

He acknowledges the justice of his punishment and seems to intimate that he must have been possessed of the devil, to have committed the vile murder of his two innocent children. He kisses their dead bodies and exclaims :—

“ Farewell ye bloody ashes of my boys !
My punishments are their eternal joys.”

With this assertion of poetical justice the play closes.

Such is the story of the crime as we find it in the play. According to Mr. Steevens, the author has slightly deviated from the story as it is related in Yorkshire. The immediate cause of the crime seems to have been a suspicion in Mr. Calverly's mind of his wife's infidelity. “ Mr. Calverly (says Mr. Steevens) is represented to have been of a passionate disposition, and to have struck one of his children in the presence of his wife, who pertly told him ‘ to correct children of his own when he could produce any’. On this single provocation he is said to have committed all the bloody facts that furnish matter for the tragedy before us.” The author apparently had this fact in mind when he put these words into the Husband's mouth :—

“ Puh ! bastards, bastards, bastards !”

The principal characters in the tragedy are two in number, to neither of which has the author given a name except

the indefinite one of Husband and Wife, and they are known as such throughout the play. The explanation of this fact is that the murder on which the drama is founded occurred only a few years before it was dramatised, and the author did not consider himself at liberty to use the real names of his characters, and was of opinion that fictitious ones would be out of place as the true ones were generally known.

The Husband is depicted as a man of coarse and violent passions ; proud, selfish and brutal in disposition. He is haunted by the suspicion that his wife is unfaithful to him. The horrible thought is ever present with him ; it cankers and corrodes his mind and brings out all the evil passions of his nature. His wife expostulates with him on his bad habits, she asks him the cause of his discontent, and elicits the following reply.—

“ A vengeance strip thee naked ! thou art cause,
Effect, quality, property ; thou, thou, thou ! ”

Among his many vices is that of gambling, which he pursues with all the spasmodic energy of his violent nature.

“ Dice and voluptuous meetings, midnight revels,”
frit away his inheritance, and he finds himself face to face with beggary. Having dissipated his ample fortune and reduced “ thrice three thousand acres into the compass of a little round table,” he has not the manliness to face the worst and strive to mend it by forsaking his evil ways. He looks into the future and beholds his sons grown up into beggars. His false pride appeals to his vile passions and they whisper him a way out of his dilemma ; he resolves on the wholesale murder of his family, and forthwith sets about putting his plan into execution. This fact proves him to have been of a thoroughly depraved disposition, or

suggests the idea that he is possessed of the devil; and his wife seeks to explain his extraordinary conduct by supposing he is subject to demonical influence.

“ So much unlike
Himself at first, as if some vexed spirit
Had got his form upon him.”

The author evidently had this thought in his mind as the reason of his committing the crime, for we find the Husband alluding to the same idea.

“ Now glides the devil from me,
Departs at every joint.”

Again—

“ O, 'twas the enemy my eyes so bleared.”

At the time this drama was written the mass of the people, from the monarch to the peasant, were saturated with superstition; witchcraft and demonology were universally accepted, in fact it was regarded as a fashionable belief. This circumstance may account for the author introducing it as a probable explanation of Mr. Calverly's extraordinary crime. The Husband's character has been declared inconsistent. I cannot view it in that light. To me he seems both consistent in character and purpose. The only instance in which inconsistency can be fixed upon him is in the scene with the Master of the College, when the moralising of the collegian appears to awaken in his breast a feeling of sorrow for his sins. That I take to be intended as a masterpiece of dissimulation, and the next moment proves it to be such, for he proceeds in his plan of murdering his whole family by killing his eldest son. His repentance in the end is rather sudden, but in making it so the author has followed nature; the repentance of murderers,

both in fiction and real life, is invariably left to the last moment, when there is nothing further to hope for, and in the nature of things must strike the mind as being violent and abrupt.

The character of the wife is the very antithesis of that of the Husband. She is patient, yielding, affectionate and submissive. Love of her husband, not fear, may be taken as the keynote of her character. Her submission to the violence and abuse of her husband, is the outcome of love; the object of her affection may be a worthless profligate, but nevertheless he is the object of her love. It may be urged that a woman of spirit would rather have left her husband than put up with the coarseness and vulgarity Mr. Calverly bestowed so lavishly on his wife; granted, but all women are not women of spirit; Mrs. Calverly was not a woman of spirit, and in that respect she presents one of those striking contrasts which occasionally meets and astonishes us in real life. She is willing, nay eager to sacrifice her own interests for the privilege of worshipping her idol and calling forth a recognition of her worship from him.

“ Sir, do but turn a gentle eye on me,
And what the law shall give me leave to do,
You shall command.”

Even the suspicion of her chastity, which her husband wrongfully tries to fix on her, is met, not with reproachful violence, but a steadfast and unchangeable love.

“ Heav’n knows how these words wrong me : but I may
Endure these griefs among a thousand more.”

Her pure and unselfish love urges her to sacrifice everything on the altar of her affection, even to her dowry upon which her children are to depend in the future for a living.

“ Consume it, as your pleasure counsels you,
And all I wish even clemency affords ;
Give me but pleasant looks, and modest words.”

To the last her love is true to its first inspiration ; she is willing to surrender home, children, everything, if she can but save and enjoy the worthless object upon which it is lavished. The character of the Wife is consistent in every respect ; the individualisation is strongly marked, and true to nature. The annals of real life furnish us with many Mrs. Calverlys.

The other characters in the play are of little consequence ; they are merely lay figures that serve to support and render the personification of the Husband and Wife more striking by the force of contrast.

There is every indication that this little drama was a hasty effort to catch the whim of the moment and present it to the people in all its grim realism ; under such circumstances inferior workmanship and feeble characterisation may be excused. But are such defects to be found ? The beauties are many and palpable ; the defects few and indefinite. The situations are striking and dramatic ; the pathos deep and penetrating, reaching the heart with that directness of aim which is the most prominent characteristic of our early dramatists. The characters are drawn in bold, lifelike outline, and a master's hand can be discerned in the tracing ; their language is forcible, natural and appropriate to the situations in which they are placed.

Considering the shortness of the composition, there are many passages of great beauty and power ; poetic thoughts clothed in poetic words which are not unworthy of the

author to whom this play has been attributed. A few passages will suffice in support of the assertion.—

“ I see how Ruin with a palsied hand
Begins to shake this ancient seat to dust :
The heavy weight of sorrow draws my lids
Over my dankish eyes : I scarce can see ;
Thus grief will last ; it wakes and sleeps in me.”

Again—

“ Now glides the devil from me,
Departs at every joint ; heaves up my nails.
O catch him torments, that were ne'er invented !
Bind him one thousand more, you blessed angels,
In that pit bottomless. Let him not rise
To make men act unnatural tragedies ;
To spread into a father, and in fury
Make him his childrens' executioner.”

The Husband's sorrow on viewing the bodies of his murdered children is expressed in a passage of great beauty and pathos.

“ Here's weight enough to make a heartstring crack,
O were it lawful that your pretty souls
Might look from heav'n into your father's eyes,
Then should you see the penitent glasses melt,
And both your murders shoot upon my cheeks ;
But you are playing in the angels' laps,
And will not look on me.”

Perhaps the greatest defect of this dramatic trifle is the occasional irregularity of its versification ; this fault, however, may be urged in a greater or less degree against any of our poets, and even Milton, who is held up as a pattern of severe and correct metre, is not without it. The existence of this defect may be explained or condoned by the fact that the drama was hastily written, and that the author intended at some future leisure to prune its excrescences

and reduce its ruggedness to metrical harmony, a leisure which the pressure of circumstances did not permit him.

Rightly or wrongly this *Yorkshire Tragedy* has been attributed to Shakespeare. What evidence have we that it is his? The external evidence is strong and pertinent, and appears to me conclusive. It rests upon these two points; the Stationers' register, and the title page of the first quarto, both of which bear the name of Shakespeare. The argument advanced against this evidence is that unscrupulous printers of the period were accustomed to seize the name of a popular author and attach it to a work of inferior merit, for the sake of the increased sale it was likely to bring them. Is the present work one of inferior merit? if it be not, the necessity for the deception disappears; and if it be an inferior performance, how are we to explain the strange fact of Shakespeare countenancing the fraud by allowing his name to be tacked to it on two separate occasions? To answer by saying he was careless of his fame so long as his writings paid, is simply begging the question. Would an author of the present day sit calm and silent while a work, of which he had every reason to feel ashamed, was being fathered on him and sold to the public as his production? I venture to answer No. Human nature is much about the same in the nineteenth as it was in the seventeenth century. Besides, it was acted at the Globe theatre, and printed and published at a time when Shakespeare must have been resident in, or frequently visiting, the metropolis, and it requires an extraordinary stretch of the imagination to suppose that the work was not brought under his notice. Of course there is the vague probability that he did see and know of the fraud, and that his carelessness or indifference

allowed him to wink at the deception, but I cannot believe it. So far the external evidence. The internal evidence seems to me as strong and conclusive as the external. I cannot read the opening scene or the following passages—

“ If marriage be honourable,” ACT I, SC II.

“ O thou confounded man ! ” etc. ACT II, SC II.

without feeling and thinking that I am reading Shakespeare. The phraseology, the mode of thought and expression, the poetry and grace of language appear to me to savour strongly of the characteristics of Shakespeare's acknowledged productions. One of the arguments advanced against its authenticity is the time at which it appeared. It is contended that a work of so little merit could not have been produced by him at the time that gave birth to *Lear* and *Macbeth*. Why not? I am willing to admit that *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is unequal and vastly inferior to either of those masterpieces, but are authors' works one level equality of merit? Our whole literary history contradicts the assumption. The marvel is that Shakespeare should have produced so many works of such splendid equality and perfection; it is this fact that raises him head and shoulders above his brother giants of the drama. But the same fact does not prove that he was incapable of writing below the level of his splendid equality. Are Marlowe's, Beaumont and Fletcher's or Massinger's works of the same level equality? Take their great contemporary, Ben Jonson, who produced a mass of rich and varied writings, and the number of his plays that show a maximum of uniform excellence, can be counted on the fingers of either hand. Among all the old dramatists, next to Shakespeare, Ford and Shirley may be mentioned as the

only dramatic writers who show a level equality of merit, if we take the whole of their plays into consideration.

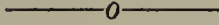
I am not saying that *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is a masterpiece, or that it is equal to the best works of our great poet, but I do say it is a creditable performance and one of which he need not have been ashamed. The pity of it is that its creator is shrouded in doubt; could that point be definitely settled, I feel assured that its author's name would spell the magic word SHAKESPEARE.

A. F. HOPKINSON.

London, January 31st. 1891.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.



HUSBAND.

MASTER OF A COLLEGE.

A KNIGHT, *a Magistrate.*

SEVERAL GENTLEMEN.

OLIVER.

RALPH

SAMUEL.



Servants.

Other Servants.

Officers.

A Little Boy.

WIFE.

Maid-Servant.

SCENE,—Calverly *in* Yorkshire.



A YORKSHIRE TRAGEDY.



ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A room in a Country House.*

Enter OLIVER and RALPH.

Oliv. Sirrah Ralph, my young mistress is in such a pitiful passionate humour for the long absence of her love—

Ralph. Why, can you blame her? Why, apples hanging longer on the tree than when they are ripe, make so many fallings; viz. mad wenches, because they are not gathered in time, are fain to drop of themselves, and then 'tis common you know for every man to take them up.

Oliv. Mass, thou say'st true, 'tis common indeed. But sirrah, is neither our young master returned, nor our fellow Sam come from London?

Ralph. Neither of either, as the puritan bawd says. 'Slid, I hear Sam. Sam's come: here he is; tarry;—come i'faith: now my nose itches for news.

Oliv. And so does mine elbow.

Sam. [*Within.*] Where are you there? Boy, look you walk my horse with discretion. I have rid him simply: I warrant his skin sticks to his back with very heat. If he should catch cold and get the cough of the lungs, I were well served, were I not?

Enter SAM.

What Ralph and Oliver !

Both. Honest fellow Sam, welcome i'faith. What tricks hast thou brought from London ?

Sam. You see I am hanged after the truest fashion : three hats, and two glasses bobbing upon them ; two rebato wires upon my breast, a cap-case by my side, a brush at my back, an almanack in my pocket, and three ballads in my codpiece. Nay, I am the true picture of a common serving-man.

Oliv. I'll swear thou art ; thou may'st set up when thou wilt : there's many a one begins with less I can tell thee, that proves a rich man ere he dies. But what's the news from London, Sam ?

Ralph. Ay, that's well said ; what's the news from London, sirrah ? My young mistress keeps such a puling for her love.

Sam. Why the more fool she ; ay, the more ninny-hammer she.

Oliv. Why, Sam, why ?

Sam. Why, he is married to another long ago.

Both. I'faith ? You jest.

Sam. Why, did you not know that till now ? Why, he's married, beats his wife, and has two or three children by her. For you must note, that any woman bears the more when she is beaten.

Ralph. Ay, that's true, for she bears the blows.

Oliv. Sirrah Sam, I would not for two years' wages my young mistress knew so much : she'd run upon the left hand of her wit, and ne'er be her own woman again.

Sam. And I think she was blest in her cradle, that he

never came in her bed. Why, he has consumed all, pawn'd his lands, and made his university brother stand in wax for him : there's a fine phrase for a scrivener. Puh ! he owes more than his skin is worth.

Oliv. Is't possible ?

Sam. Nay, I'll tell you, moreover, he calls his wife whore, as familiarly as one would call Moll and Doll ; and his children bastards, as naturally as can be. But what have we here ? I thought 'twas something pulled down my breeches ; I quite forgot my two poking-sticks : these came from London. Now anything is good here that comes from London.

Oliv. Ay, far fetched, you know, Sam. But speak in your conscience, i'faith ; have not we as good poking-sticks i' the country as need be put in the fire ?

Sam. The mind of a thing is all ; the mind of a thing is all ; and as thou said'st even now, far fetched are the best things for ladies.

Oliv. Ay, and for waiting gentle-women too.

Sam. But Ralph, what, is our beer sour this thunder ?

Ralph. No, no, it holds countenance yet.

Sam. Why then follow me ; I'll teach you the finest humour to be drunk in : I learned it at London last week.

Both. I'faith ? Let's hear it, let's hear it.

Sam. The bravest humour ! 'twould do a man good to be drunk in it ; they call it knighting in London, when they drink upon their knees.

Both. 'Faith that's excellent.

Sam. Come follow me ; I'll give you all the degrees of it in order.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*An apartment in Calverly Hall.*

Enter WIFE.

Wife. What will become of us? All will away:
My husband never ceases in expense,
Both to consume his credit and his house;
And 'tis set down by heaven's just decree,
That riot's child must needs be beggery.
Are these the virtues that his youth did promise?
Dice and voluptuous meetings, midnight revels,
Taking his bed with surfeits; ill beseeming
The ancient honour of his house and name?
And this not all, but that which kills me most,
When he recounts his losses and false fortunes,
The weakness of his state so much dejected,
Not as a man repentent, but half mad.
His fortunes cannot answer his expense,
He sits, and sullenly locks up his arms;
Forgetting heaven, looks downward; which makes him
Appear so dreadful that he frights my heart:
Walks heavily, as if his soul were earth;
Not penitent for those his sins are past,
But vexed his money cannot make them last:
A fearful melancholy, ungodly sorrow.
O, yonder he comes; now in despite of ills
I'll speak to him, and I will hear him speak,
And do my best to drive it from his heart.

Enter HUSBAND.

Hus. Pox o' the last throw! It made five hundred angels

Vanish from my sight. I am damned, I'm damned ;
The angels have forsook me. Nay it is
Certainly true ; for he that has no coin
Is damned in this world ; he is gone, he's gone,

Wife. Dear husband.

Hus. O ! most punishment of all, I have a wife.

Wife. I do entreat you, as you love your soul,
Tell me the cause of this your discontent.

Hus. A vengeance strip thee naked ! thou art cause,
Effect, quality, property ; thou, thou, thou. [*Exit.*

Wife. Bad turned to worse ; both beggary of his soul
And of the body ;—and so much unlike
Himself at first, as if some vexed spirit
Had got his form upon him. He comes again.

Re-enter HUSBAND.

He says I am the cause : I never yet
Spoke less than words of duty and of love,

Hus. If marriage be honourable, then cuckolds are honourable, for they cannot be made without marriage. Fool ! what meant I to marry to get beggars ? Now must my eldest son be a knave or nothing ; he cannot live upon the fool, for he will have no land to maintain him. That mortgage sits like a snaffle upon mine inheritance, and makes me chew upon iron. My second son must be a promoter, and my third a thief, or an underputter ; a slave pander. Oh beggary, beggary, to what base use dost thou put a man ! I think the devil scorns to be a bawd ; he bears himself more proudly, has more care of his credit. Base, slavish, abject, filthy poverty !

Wife. Good sir, by all our vows I do beseech you,
Show me the true cause of your discontent.

Hus. Money, money, money ; and thou must supply me.

Wife. Alas, I am the least cause of your discontent,
Yet what is mine either in rings or jewels,
Use to your own desire ; but I beseech you,
As you are a gentleman by many bloods,
Though I myself be out of your respect,
Think on the state of these three lovely boys
You have been father to.

Hus. Puh! bastards, bastards,
Bastards ; begot in tricks, begot in tricks. [may

Wife. Heav'n knows how these words wrong me : but I
Endure these griefs among a thousand more,
O call to mind your lands already mortgaged,
Yourself wound into debts, your hopeful brother
At the university in bonds for you,
Like to be seized upon ; and—

Hus. Have done, thou harlot,
Whom though for fashion-sake I married,
I never could abide. Think'st thou, thy words
Shall kill my pleasures ? Fall off to thy friends ;
Thou and thy bastards beg ; I will not bate
A whit in humour. Midnight, still I love you,
And revel in your company ! Curbed in,
Shall it be said in all societies,
That I broke custom ? that I flagged in money ?
No, those thy jewels I will play as freely
As when my state was fullest.

Wife. Be it so.

Hus. Nay I protest (and take that for an earnest)

[Spurns her.

I will for ever hold thee in contempt,
And never touch the sheets that cover thee,
But be divorced in bed, till thou consent
Thy dowry shall be sold, to give new life
Unto those pleasures which I most affect.

Wife. Sir, do but turn a gentle eye on me,
And what the law shall give me leave to do,
You shall command.

Hus. Look it be done. Shall I want dust,
And like a slave wear nothing in my pockets

[Holds his hands in his pockets.

But my bare hands, to fill them up with nails?
O much against my blood! Let it be done;
I was never made to be a looker on,
A bawd to dice; I'll shake the drabs myself,
And make them yield: I say, look it be done.

Wife. I take my leave: it shall,

[Exit,

Hus. Speedily, speedily.

I hate the very hour I chose a wife:
A trouble, trouble! Three children, like three evils,
Hang on me, Fie, fie, fie! Strumpet and bastards!

Enter three GENTLEMEN,

Strumpet and bastards!

[tongue?

1st Gent. Still do these loathsome thoughts jar on your
Yourself to stain the honour of your wife,
Nobly descended? Those whom men call mad,
Endanger others; but he's more than mad
That wounds himself; whose own words do proclaim

Scandals unjust, to soil his better name.

It is not fit ; I pray, forsake it.

2nd Gent. Good sir, let modesty reprove you.

3rd Gent. Let honest kindness sway so much with you.

Hus. Good den ; I thank you, sir ; how do you ? Adieu !
I am glad to see you. Farewell instructions,
Admonitions ! [*Exeunt* GENTLEMEN.

Enter a SERVANT.

How now, sirrah ? What would you ?

Ser. Only to certify you, sir, that my mistress was met by the way, by them who were sent for her up to London by her honourable uncle, your worship's late guardian.

Hus. So, sir, then she is gone ; and so may you be ;
But let her look the thing be done she wots of,
Or hell will stand more pleasant than her house
At home. [*Exit* SERVANT.

Enter a GENTLEMAN.

Gent. Well or ill met, I care not.

Hus. No, nor I.

Gent. I am come with confidence to chide you.

Hus. Who ? me ?

Chide me ? Do 't finely then ; let it not move me :
For if thou chid'st me angry, I shall strike.

Gent. Strike thine own follies, for 'tis they deserve
To be well beaten. We are now in private ;
There's none but thou and I. Thou art fond and peevish ;
An unclean rioter ; thy lands and credit

Lie now both sick of a consumption :
I am sorry for thee. That man spends with shame,
That with his riches doth consume his name ;
And such art thou.

Hus. Peace.

Gent. No, thou shalt hear me further.
Thy father's and forefathers' worthy honours,
Which were our country monuments, our grace,
Follies in thee begin now to deface.
The spring-time of thy youth did fairly promise
Such a most fruitful summer to thy friends,
It scarce can enter into men's beliefs,
Such dearth should hang upon thee. We that see it,
Are sorry to believe it. In thy change,
This voice into all places will be hurled—
Thou and the devil have deceived the world.

Hus. I'll not endure thee.

Gent. But of all the worst,
Thy virtuous wife, right honourably allied,
Thou hast proclaimed a strumpet.

Hus. Nay then I know thee ;
Thou art her champion, thou ; her private friend ;
The party you wot on.

Gent. O ignoble thought !
I am past my patient blood. Shall I stand idle,
And see my reputation touched to death ?

Hus. It has galled you, this ; has it ?

Gent. No, monster ; I will prove
My thoughts did only tend to virtuous love.

Hus. Love of her virtues ? there it goes,

Gent. Base spirit,

To lay thy hate upon the fruitful honour
Of thine own bed!

[*They fight, and the HUS. is hurt.*]

Hus. Oh!

Gent. Wilt thou yield it yet?

Hus. Sir, sir, I have not done with you.

Gent. I hope, nor ne'er shall do.

[*They fight again.*]

Hus. Have you got tricks? Are you in cunning with

Gent. No, plain and right: [me?

He needs no cunning that for truth doth fight.

[*HUS. falls down.*]

Hus. Hard fortune! am I levelled with the ground?

Gent. Now, sir, you lie at mercy.

Hus. Ay, you slave.

Gent. Alas, that hate should bring us to our grave!

You see, my sword's not thirsty for your life:

I am sorrier for your wound than you yourself.

You're of a virtuous house; show virtuous deeds;

'Tis not your honour, 'tis your folly bleeds.

Much good has been expected in your life;

Cancel not all men's hopes: you have a wife,

Kind and obedient; heep not wrongful shame

On her and your posterity; let only sin be sore,

And by this fall, rise never to fall more.

And so I leave you.

[*Exit.*]

Hus. Has the dog left me then,

After his tooth has left me? O, my heart

Would fain leap after him. Revenge I say;

I'm mad to be revenged. My strumpet wife,

It is thy quarrel that rips thus my flesh,

And makes my breast spit blood ;—but thou shalt bleed.
Vanquished? got down? unable e'en to speak?
Surely 'tis want of money makes men weak :
Ay, 'twas that o'erthrew me ; I'd ne'er been down else.

[*Exit.*]

A C T II.

SCENE I.—*Another room in Calverly Hall.*

Enter WIFE and a SERVANT.

Ser. 'Faith, mistress, if it might not be presumption
In me to tell you so, for his excuse
You had small reason, knowing his abuse.

Wife. I grant I had ; but alas,
Why should our faults at home be spread abroad?
'Tis grief enough within doors. At first sight
Mine uncle could run o'er his prodigal life
As perfectly as if his serious eye
Had numbered all his follies :
Knew of his mortgaged lands, his friends in bonds,
Himself withered with debts ; and in that minute
Had I added his usage and unkindness,
'Twould have confounded every thought of good :
Where now, fathering his riots on his youth,
Which time and tame experience will shake off,—
Guessing his kindness to me, (as I smoothed him
With all the skill I had, though his deserts
Are in form uglier than an unshaped bear,)

He's ready to prefer him to some office
 And place at court ; a good and sure relief
 To all his stooping fortunes. 'Twill be a means, I hope,
 To make new league between us, and redeem
 His virtues with his lands.

Ser. I should think so, mistress. If he should not now
 be kind to you, and love you, and cherish you up, I should
 think the devil himself kept open house in him.

Wife. I doubt not but he will. Now pr'ythee leave me ;
 I think I hear him coming.

Ser. I am gone.

[*Exit.*

Wife. By this good means I shall preserve my lands,
 And free my husband out of usurers' hands.
 Now there's no need of sale ; my uncle's kind ;
 I hope, if aught, this will content his mind,
 Here comes my husband.

Enter HUSBAND.

Hus. Now, are you come ? Where's the money ? Let's
 see the money. Is the rubbish sold ? those wise-acres, your
 lands ? Why when ? The money ? Where is it ? Pour it
 down ; down with it, down with it : I say pour't on the
 ground ; let's see it, let's see it.

Wife. Good sir, keep but in patience, and I hope my
 words shall like you well. I bring you better comfort than
 the sale of my dowry.

Hus. Ha ! What's that ?

Wife. Pray do not fright me, sir, but vouchsafe me
 hearing. My uncle, glad of your kindness to me and mild
 usage (for so I made it to him), hath in pity of your de-
 clining fortunes, provided a place for you at court, of worth

and credit; which so much overjoyed me—

Hus. Out on thee, filth! over and overjoyed, when I'm in torment? [*Spurns her.*] Thou politic whore, subtler than nine devils, was this thy journey to nunck? to set down the history of me, of my state and fortunes? Shall I that dedicated myself to pleasure, be now confined in service? to crouch and stand like an old man i' the hams, my hat off? I that could never abide to uncover my head i' the church? Base slut! this fruit bear thy complaints.

Wife. O, heaven knows
That my complaints were praises, and best words,
Of you and your estate. Only my friends
Knew of your mortgaged lands, and were possessed
Of every accident before I came.
If you suspect it but a plot in me,
To keep my dowry, or for mine own good,
Or my poor children's, (though it suits a mother
To show a natural care in their reliefs,)
Yet I'll forget myself to calm your blood:
Consume it, as your pleasure counsels you.
And all I wish even clemency affords;
Give me but pleasant looks, and modest words.

Hus. Money, whore, money, or I'll—

[*Draws a dagger.*]

Enter a SERVANT hastily.

What the devil! How now! thy hasty news?

Ser. May it please you, sir—

Hus. What! may I not look upon my dagger? Speak, villain, or I'll execute the point on thee. Quick, short.

Ser. Why, sir, a gentleman from the university stays below to speak with you. [*Exit.*

Hus. • From the university? so; university:—that long word runs through me. [*Exit.*

Wife. Was ever wife so wretchedly beset?
 Had not this news stepped in between, the point
 Had offered violence unto my breast.
 That which some women call great misery,
 Would show but little here; would scarce be seen
 Among my miseries. I may compare
 For wretched fortunes, with all wives that are.
 Nothing will please him, until all be nothing.
 He calls it slavery to be preferred;
 A place of credit, a base servitude.
 What shall become of me, and my poor children,
 Two here, and one at nurse? my pretty beggars!
 I see how Ruin with a palsied hand
 Begins to shake this ancient seat to dust:
 The heavy weight of sorrow draws my lids
 Over my dankish eyes: I can scarce see;
 Thus grief will last; it wakes and sleeps with me. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Another Apartment in Calverly Hall.*

Enter HUSBAND and the MASTER OF A COLLEGE.

Hus. Please you draw near, sir; you're exceeding welcome.

Mast. That's my doubt; I fear I come not to be welcome.

Hus. Yes, howsoever.

Mast. 'Tis not my fashion, sir, to dwell in long circumstance, but to be plain and effectual, therefore to the

purpose. The cause of my setting forth was piteous and lamentable. That hopeful young gentleman, your brother, whose virtues we all love dearly, through your default and unnatural negligence lies in bond executed for your debt,—a prisoner; all his studies amazed, his hope struck dead, and the pride of his youth muffled in these dark clouds of oppression.

Hus. Umph, umph, umph!

Mast. O you have killed the towardest hope of all our university, wherefore without repentance and amends, expect ponderous and sudden judgments to fall grievously upon you. Your brother, a man who profited in his divine employments, and might have made ten thousand souls fit for heaven, is now by your careless courses cast into prison, which you must answer for; and assure your spirit it will come home at length.

Hus. O God! oh!

Mast. Wise men think ill of you; others speak ill of you; no man loves you: nay, even those whom honesty condemns, condemn you: and take this from the virtuous affection I bear your brother; never look for prosperous hour, good thoughts, quiet sleep, contented walks, nor anything that makes man perfect, till you redeem him. What is your answer? How will you bestow him? Upon desperate misery, or better hopes? I suffer till I hear your answer.

Hus. Sir, you have much wrought with me; I feel you in my soul: you are your art's master. I never had sense till now; your syllables have cleft me. Both for your words and pains I thank you. I cannot but acknowledge greivous wrongs done to my brother; mighty, mighty, mighty,

mighty wrongs. Within, there !

Enter a SERVANT.

Hus. Fill me a bowl of wine.

[*Exit SER.*

Alas, poor brother, bruised with an execution for my sake !

Mast. A bruise indeed makes many a mortal sore,
Till the grave cure them.

Re-enter SERVANT with wine.

Hus. Sir, I begin to you ; you've chid your welcome.

Mast. I could have wished it better for your sake.

I pledge you sir :—To the kind man in prison.

Hus. Let it be so. Now, sir, if you please to spend but a few minutes in a walk about my grounds below, my man here shall attend you. I doubt not but by that time to be furnished of a sufficient answer, and therein my brother fully satisfied.

Mast. Good sir, in that the angels would be pleased, and the world's murmurs calmed ; and I should say I set forth then upon a lucky day. [*Exeunt MAST. and SER.*

Hus. O thou confused man ! Thy pleasant sins have undone thee ; thy damnation has beggared thee. That heaven should say we must not sin, and yet made woman ! give our senses way to find pleasure, which being found, confounds us ! Why should we know those things so much misuse us ? O, would virtue had been forbidden ! We should then have proved all virtuous ; for 'tis our blood to love what we are forbidden. Had not drunkenness been forbidden, what man would have been fool to a beast, and

zany to a swine,—to show tricks in the mire? What is there in three dice, to make a man draw thrice three thousand acres into the compass of a little round table, and with the gentleman's palsy in the hand shake out his posterity thieves or beggars? 'Tis done; I have done 't i' faith: terrible, horrible misery! How well was I left! Very well, very well. My lands showed like a full moon about me; but now the moon's in the last quarter,—waning, waning; and I am mad to think that moon was mine; mine and my father's, and my fore-fathers': generations, generations.—Down goes the house of us; down, down it sinks. Now is the name a beggar; begs in me. That name which hundreds of years has made this shire famous, in me and my posterity runs out. In my seed five are made miserable besides myself: my riot is now my brother's gaoler, my wife's sighing, my three boy's penury, and mine own confusion.

Why sit my hairs upon my cursèd head?

[Tears his hair.]

Will not this poison scatter them? O, my brother's
In execution among devils that
Stretch him and make him give; and I in want.
Not able for to live, nor to redeem him!
Divines and dying men may talk of hell,
But in my heart her several torments dwell;
Slavery and misery. Who, in this case,
Would not take up money upon his soul?
Pawn his salvation, live at interest?
I, that did ever in abundance dwell;
For me to want, exceeds the throes of hell.

Enter a little BOY with a top and scourge.

Son. What ail you, father? Are you not well? I cannot scourge my top as long as you stand so. You take up all the room with your wide legs. Puh! you cannot make me afraid with this; I fear no vizards, nor bugbears.

[*He takes up the CHILD by the skirts of his long coat with one hand, and draws his dagger with the other.*

Hus. Up, sir, for here thou hast no inheritance left.

Son. O, what will you do, father? I am your white boy.

Hus. Thou shalt be my red boy; take that.

[*Strikes him.*

Son. O, you hurt me, father.

Hus. My eldest beggar,
Thou shalt not live to ask an usurer bread;
To cry at a great man's gate; or follow,
"Good your honour," by a coach; no, nor your brother:
'Tis charity to brain you.

Son. How shall I learn, now my head's broke?

Hus. Bleed, bleed, [Stabs him.

Rather than beg. Be not thy name's disgrace:
Spurn thou thy fortunes first; if they be base, [blood
Come view thy second brother's. Fates! My children's
Shall spin into your faces; you shall see,
How confidently we scorn beggary! [Exit with his SON.

SCENE III.—*A Room in Calverly Hall.*

A MAID discovered with a CHILD in her arms; the MOTHER sleeping on a Couch beside her.

Maid. Sleep, sweet babe; sorrow makes thy mother sleep:
It bodes small good when heaviness falls so deep.

Hush, pretty boy ; thy hopes might have been better.
'Tis lost at dice, what ancient honour won :
Hard, when the father plays away the son !
Nothing but misery serves in this house ;
Ruin and desolation. Oh !

Enter HUSBAND with his SON bleeding.

Hus. Whore, give me that boy.

[Strives with her for the CHILD.

Maid. O help, help ! Out alas ! Murder, murder !

Hus. Are you gossiping, you prating, sturdy quean ?
I'll break your clamour with your neck. Down stairs ;
Tumble, tumble, headlong. So :—

[He throws her down, and stabs the CHILD.

The surest way to charm a woman's tongue,
Is—break her neck : a politician did it.

Son. Mother, mother ; I am killed, mother !

[WIFE awakes.

Wife. Ha, who's that cried ? O me ! my children !
Both bloody, both bloody !

[Catches up the younger CHILD.

Hus. Strumpet, let go the boy ; let go the beggar.

Wife. O my sweet husband !

Hus. Filth, harlot !

Wife. O, what will you do, dear husband ?

Hus. Give me the bastard.

Wife. Your own sweet boy—

Hus. There are too many beggars.

Wife. Good, my husband—

Hus. Dost thou prevent me still ?

Wife. O God !

Hus. Have at his heart.

[*Stabs at the CHILD in her arms.*]

Wife. O, my dear boy !

Hus. Brat, thou shalt not live to shame thy house—

Wife. Oh heaven !

[*She is hurt and sinks down.*]

Hus. And perish !—Now begone :

There's whores enough, and want would make thee one.

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. O, sir, what deeds are these ?

Hus. Base slave, my vassal !

Com'st thou between my fury to question me ?

Ser. Were you the devil, I would hold you, sir.

Hus. Hold me ? Presumption ! I'll undo thee for it.

Ser. 'Sblood, you have undone us all, sir.

Hus. Tug at thy master ?

Ser. Tug at a monster.

Hus. Have I no power ? Shall my slave fetter me ?

Ser. Nay, then the devil wrestles ; I am thrown.

Hus. O villain ! now I'll tug thee, now I'll tear thee ;

Set quick spurs to my vassal ; bruise him, trample him.

So ; I think thou wilt not follow me in haste.

My horse stands ready saddled. Away, away ;

Now to my brat at nurse, my sucking beggar :

Fates, I'll not leave you one to trample on !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*Court before the House.*

Enter HUSBAND ; *to him the* MASTER OF THE COLLEGE.

Mast. How is it with you, sir ?

Methinks you look of a distracted colour.

Hus. Who, I, sir ? 'Tis but your fancy.

Please you walk in, sir, and I'll soon resolve you ;

I want one small part to make up the sum,

And then my brother shall rest satisfied.

Mast. I shall be glad to see it. Sir, I'll attend you.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A room in Calverly Hall.*

The WIFE, SERVANT, *and* CHILDREN *discovered.*

Ser. Oh, I am scarce able to heave up myself,

He has so bruised me with his devilish weight,

And torn my flesh with his blood hasty spur :

A man before of easy constitution,

Till now Hell power supplied, to his soul's wrong :

O how damnation can make weak men strong !

Enter the MASTER OF THE COLLEGE *and two* SERVANTS.

Ser. O the most piteous deed, sir, since you came !

Mast. A deadly greeting ! Hath he summed up these

To satisfy his brother? Here's another;
And by the bleeding infants, the dead mother.

Wife. Oh! Oh!

Mast. Surgeons! surgeons! she recovers life:—
One of his men all faint and bloodied!

1st Ser. Follow; our murderous master has took horse
To kill his child at nurse. O, follow quickly.

Mast. I am the readiest; it shall be my charge
To raise the town upon him.

1st Ser. Good sir, do follow him.

[*Exeunt* MASTER and two SERVANTS.]

Wife. O my children!

1st Ser. How is it with my most afflicted mistress?

Wife. Why do I now recover? Why half live,
To see my children bleed before my eyes?
A sight able to kill a mother's breast, without
An executioner. What, art thou mangled too?

1st Ser. I, thinking to prevent what his quick mischiefs
Had so soon acted, came and rushed upon him.
We struggled; but a fouler strength than his
O'erthrew me with his arms, then did he bruise me,
And rent my flesh, and robbed me of my hair;
Like a man mad in execution,
Made me unfit to rise and follow him.

Wife. What is it has beguiled him of all grace,
And stole away humanity from his breast?
To slay his children, purpose to kill his wife,
And spoil his servants—

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. Please you to leave this most accursèd place:

A surgeon waits within.

Wife.

Willing to leave it?

'Tis guilty of sweet blood, innocent blood:

Murder has took this chamber with full hands,

And will ne'er out as long as the house stands. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*A high Road.*

Enter HUSBAND mounted; the Horse stumbles and falls.

Hus. O stumbling jade! The spavin overtake thee!
The fifty diseases stop thee!

Oh, I am sorely bruised! Plague founder thee!

Thou run'st at ease and pleasure. Heart of chance!

To throw me now, within a flight o' the town,

In such plain even ground too! 'Sfoot, a man

May dice upon it, and throw away the meadows.

Filthy beast!

[*A cry in the distance.*] Follow, follow, follow.

Hus. Ha! I hear sounds of men, like hue and cry.

Up, up, and struggle to thy horse; make on;

Dispatch that little beggar, and all's done.

[*A cry in the distance.*] Here, here; this way, this way.

Hus. At my back? Oh;

What fate have I! my limbs deny me go.

My will is 'bated; beggary claims a part.

O could I here reach to the infant's heart!

*Enter the MASTER OF THE COLLEGE, three GENTLEMEN, and
ATTENDANTS with halberds.*

All. Here, here; yonder, yonder.

Mast. Unnatural, flinty, more than barbarous!

The Scythians, even the marble-hearted Fates,
 Could not have acted more remorseless deeds,
 In their relentless natures, than these of thine.
 Was this the answer I long waited on?
 The satisfaction for thy prisoned brother?

Hus. Why he can have no more of us than our skins,
 And some of them want but fleaing.

1st Gent. Great sins have made him impudent.

Mast. He has shed so much blood, that he cannot blush.

2nd Gent. Away with him ; bear him to the justice's.
 A gentleman of worship dwells at hand :
 There shall his deeds be blazed.

Hus. Why all the better.
 My glory 'tis to have my action known ;
 I grieve for nothing, but I missed of one.

Mast. There's little of a father in that grief :
 Bear him away.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*A room in the House of a MAGISTRATE.*

Enter a KNIGHT, and three GENTLEMEN.

Knight. Endanger'd so his wife? murder'd his children?

1st Gent. So the cry goes.

Knight. I am sorry I e'er knew him ;
 That ever he took life and natural being
 From such an honoured stock, and fair descent,
 Till this black minute without stain or blemish.

1st Gent. Here come the men.

Enter the MASTER OF THE COLLEGE, &c., with the Prisoner.

Knight. The serpent of his house ! I am sorry

For this time, that I am in place of justice.

Mast. Please you, sir—

Knight. Do not repeat it twice; I know too much:
Would it had ne'er been thought on! sir, I bleed for you.

1st Gent. Your father's sorrows are alive in me.
What made you show such monstrous cruelty?

Hus. In a word, sir, I have consumed all, played away
long-acre; and I thought it the charitablest deed I could do,
to cozen beggary, and knock my house o' the head.

Knight. O, in a cooler blood you will repent it.

Hus. I repent now that one is left unkill'd;
My brat at nurse. I would full fain have weaned him.

Knight. Well, I do not think, but in to-morrow's judg-
The terror will sit closer to your soul, [ment,
When the dread thought of death remembers you;
To further which, take this sad voice from me,
Never was act played more unnaturally.

Hus. I thank you, sir.

Knight. Go lead him to the gaol;
Where justice claims all, there must pity fail.

Hus. Come, come; away with me.

[*Exeunt* HUS., &c.]

Mast. Sir, you deserve the worship of your place:
Would all did so! In you the law is grace.

Knight. It is my wish it should be so. Ruinous man!
The desolation of his house, the blot
Upon his predecessors' honoured name!
That man is nearest shame, that is past shame.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*Before Calverly Hall.*

Enter HUSBAND *guarded*, MASTER OF THE COLLEGE,
GENTLEMEN, *and* ATTENDANTS.

Hus. I am, right against my house,—seat of my ancestors :
I hear my wife's alive, but much endangered.
Let me entreat to speak with her, before
The prison gripe me.

His WIFE is brought in.

Gent. See, here she comes of herself.

Wife. O my sweet huband, my dear distressed husband,
Now in the hands of unrelenting laws,
My greatest sorrow, my extremest bleeding ;
Now my soul bleeds.

Hus. How now ? Kind to me ? Did I not wound thee ?
Left thee for dead ?

Wife. Tut, far, far greater wounds did my breast feel ;
Unkindness strikes a deeper wound than steel.
You have been still unkind to me.

Hus. 'Faith, and so I think I have ;
I did my murders roughly out of hand,
Desperate and sudden ; but thou hast devised
A fine way now to kill me : thou hast given mine eyes
Seven wounds apiece. Now glides the devil from me,
Departs at every joint ; heaves up my nails.
O catch him torments, that were ne'er invented !
Bind him one thousand more, you blessed angels,

In that pit bottomless ! Let him not rise
To make men act unnatural tragedies ;
To spread into a father, and in fury
Make him his children's executioner ;
Murder his wife, his servants, and who not ?—
For that man's dark, where heav'n is quite forgot.

Wife. O my repentant husband !

Hus. O my dear soul, whom I too much have wronged ;
For death I die, and for this have I longed.

Wife. Thou should'st not, be assured, for these faults die
If the law could forgive as soon as I.

[*The two CHILDREN are laid out.*

Hus. What sight is yonder ?

Wife. O, our two bleeding boys,
Laid forth upon the threshold.

Hus. Here's weight enough to make a heart-string crack.
O were it lawful that your pretty souls
Might look from heav'n into your father's eyes,
Then should you see the penitent glasses melt,
And both your murders shoot upon my cheeks !
But you are playing in the angels' laps,
And will not look on me, who, void of grace,
Killed you in beggary.

O that I might my wishes now attain,
I should then wish you living were again,
Though I did beg with you, which thing I feared :
O, 'twas the enemy my eyes so bleared !
O, would you could pray heav'n me to forgive,
That will unto my end repentant live !

Wife. It makes me even forget all other sorrows
And live apart with this.

Officer. Come, will you go?

Hus. I'll kiss the blood I spilt, and then I'll go :
My soul is bloodied, well may my lips be so.
Farewell, dear wife ; now thou and I must part ;
I of my wrongs repent me with my heart.

Wife. O stay ; thou shalt not go.

Hus. That's but in vain ; you see it must be so.
Farewell ye bloody ashes of my boys !
My punishments are their eternal joys.
Let every father look into my deeds,
And then their heirs may prosper, while mine bleeds.

[*Exeunt* HUS., and OFFICERS.]

Wife. More wretched am I now in this distress,
Than former sorrows made me.

Mast. O kind wife,
Be comforted ; one joy is yet unmurdered ;
You have a boy at nurse ; your joy's in him.

Wife. Dearer than all is my poor husband's life.
Heav'n give my body strength, which is yet faint
With much expense of blood, and I will kneel,
Sue for his life, number up all my friends,
To plead for pardon for my dear husband's life.

Mast. Was it in man to wound so kind a creature?
I'll ever praise a woman for thy sake.
I must return with grief ; my answer's set ;
I shall bring news weighs heavier than the debt.
Two brothers, one in bond lies overthrown,
This on a deadlier execution.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]



A NOTE.

The following note by Mr. Steevens will prove of interest to most readers.—

“I am told, such general horror was inspired by the fact on which this play is founded, that the mansion of Mr. Calverly was relinquished by all his relations, and being permitted to decay, has never since proved the residence of persons of fashion or estate, being at present no more than a farm-house. They say also, it would be difficult even now to persuade some of the common people in the neighbourhood, but that the unfortunate master of Calverly Hall underwent the fate of Regulus, and was rolled down the hill before his own seat, enclosed in a barrel stuck with nails. Such is one of the stories current among the yeomanry of the circumjacent villages, where it is likewise added, that the place of Mr. Calverly’s interment was never exactly known, several coffins supposed to be filled with sand having been deposited in various parishes, that his remains might elude the pursuit of the populace, who threatened to expose them to public infamy on a gibbet. They were imagined, however, at last to have been clandestinely conveyed into the family vault in Calverly church, where the bodies of his children lie; and it was long believed that his ghost rode every night with dreadful cries through the adjoining woods, to the terror of those whose business compelled them to travel late at night, or early in

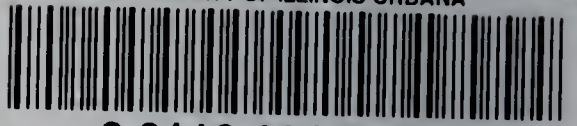
the morning. I have related all this mixture of truth and fable, only to gain an opportunity of observing that no murders were ever more deeply execrated, or bid fairer for a lasting remembrance."

THE END.

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